A SCANDAL IN PLAIN SIGHT

A report on the Sovereign Grant

2026

There are lies, damned lies and statistics. And then there is the Sovereign Grant.

Republic

A SCANDAL IN PLAIN SIGHT

A report on the Sovereign Grant

2026

Contents

1. Summary

The latest changes to the Sovereign Grant, agreed by Parliament in September this year with little scrutiny by MPs, highlight the deep flaws in the system of royal funding.

The Sovereign Grant is the official funding provided by Parliament for the monarchy. Introduced in 2011 to replace the Civil List it was suggested in the Government guidance that the Act would allow the Royal Household to make savings: *"The Sovereign Grant will allow the Royal Household to set its own priorities and thus generate economies."*[1] In reality, far from achieving savings, the cost of the Sovereign Grant to taxpayers has increased at a rate well in excess of inflation as shown in this report. The British people have every right to feel that they have been conned. The grant also helps hide the total cost of the Royal Family to UK taxpayers which now exceeds £500 million a year. People are increasingly questioning the amounts the royals are receiving and what they are spending it on.

The grant also helps hide the total cost of the Royal Family to UK taxpayers which now exceeds £500 million a year.

The funding formula for the Sovereign Grant is flawed, the income is indefensible and the expenditure is excessive. The Sovereign Grant is not so much a grant as a licence to spend without scrutiny.

Royal inflation

Costs are out of control. Royal inflation has run at an average of 7.5% a year for the 12 years from the start of the Sovereign Grant through to 2024-25. Regular inflation for the same period was just 2.8% per year on average.[2] Incredibly, the Sovereign Grant increased still further for 2025-26 to £132 million up from £86 million for 2023-24 an increase of 53%.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sovereign-grant-act-2011-guidance/sovereign-grant-act-2011-guidance

[2] Bank of England inflation calculator, figures for 2013 to 2024

The total cost of the monarchy now exceeds £500 million a year and it is expected to continue to grow in real terms despite the serious financial challenges the country now faces.

Broken promises to the nation

Ten years ago when the royals were seeking an unprecedented increase in funding for the next decade to address a maintenance backlog, the public were given a number of assurances. In particular, we were told that the Government intended to reset the funding to 15% of Crown Estate revenue once the works were complete.[3] We now know that this is not going to happen as the Government has set funding at 20.5% of the relevant benchmark for 2027/28 and beyond. This means the Sovereign Grant will be over 36% higher than what the public was led to believe in 2016 even before allowing for the huge increase in the benchmark figure due to Crown Estate revenues from wind farms.[4]

Back in 2016, Tony Johnstone-Burt, the then master of the Queen's household, said: *"On completion of the work, we'll have a palace fit for purpose until 2067."* The reality, as we now know, is that the royals are seeking more money in 2026 - some forty years earlier than Johnstone-Burt suggested. This time we are told that the extra funding is needed to address a backlog in maintenance across occupied royal palaces - which is precisely what the 10-year reservicing programme paid for by the public from 2016 to 2026 was supposed to be fixing.

The Royal Household is however not the only public body to face a heightened risk of cyber-attack this is also an issue for NHS Trusts and the military and in fact the wider public sector.

Excuses not reasons for funding increases

The reasons given for increases in royal funding do not stand up to any kind of scrutiny. For example, cybersecurity is one reason given for higher costs. The Royal Household is however not the only public body to face a heightened risk of cyber-attack this is also an issue for NHS Trusts and the military and in fact the wider public sector. Similarly, the

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funds-for-urgent-overhaul-of-buckingham-palace-granted

[4] 20.5%/15% - 1 = 36% (to the nearest whole percentage point)

amount of maintenance work needed is given as a reason but many other public bodies have challenges with maintenance of older buildings including prisons, social housing, hospitals and schools. The challenges that supporters of the royal reference are not unique in the public sector but what is unique are the monarchy's funding arrangements which are by far the most generous settlement in the entire public sector.

> *The challenges that supporters of the royal reference are not unique in the public sector but what is unique are the monarchy's funding arrangements*

Lack of accountability

Our research has identified four methods the royals use to avoid serious scrutiny and meaningful accountability:

- Concealment of documents and records.
- Censorship of the media and MPs.
- Confusion of the public.
- Circumvention of accountability mechanisms.

This report also shows how the Royal Household falls short in terms of the generally accepted standards that apply to public bodies.

2. Introduction

The Sovereign Grant Act 2011 is the official funding mechanism for the UK royal family and the Royal Household.

The Sovereign Grant replaced the four grants previously provided to the Royal Household:

• The civil list – an annual grant to the monarchy to meet 'official expenses'.
• A grant-in-aid for Royal Travel from the Department for Transport.
• A grant-in-aid for the maintenance of the Royal Palaces from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

• A grant for expenditure on communication and information from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.[5]

Until 2011, the government paid out the Civil List at a level agreed by parliament every ten years and grants-in-aid were considered. Once the Sovereign Grant Act was agreed by Parliament, the new system removed all further decision making from MPs. Instead, the size of the grant would increase in line with increases in the profits of the Crown Estate or remain unchanged should those profits fall. Further decisions regarding the grant would be largely limited to the Government and the Palace, rather than Parliament.

Once the Sovereign Grant Act was agreed by Parliament, the new system removed all further decision making from MPs.

The Sovereign Grant is funded by the Government and not by the Crown Estate. The Crown Estate's profits are simply used as a benchmark for increases to the grant. As the Crown Estate is enjoying record growth thanks in large part to offshore windfarms, its profits continue to grow and with it the size of the grant.

The purpose of the Sovereign Grant was twofold: to reduce genuine political debate about the funding of the monarchy, and to give the impression of a monarchy that funded itself through Crown revenues. On the first point George Osborne spoke plainly, telling Parliament the grant would be *"automatically uprated without an annual political argument."*[6] In our view, the absence of a regular opportunity for MPs to debate public funding of the monarchy was a major disadvantage of the new arrangements and has contributed to the numerous issues highlighted in this report. In other words, that annual political argument is necessary.

3. A grant with no clear purpose

The stated purpose of the Sovereign Grant is to provide resources for use for that year by the Royal Household in support of the monarch's official duties.[7] The Act does not define

[5] Explanatory Notes to the Sovereign Grant Act 2011, paragraph 4.
[6] HC Deb, 30 June 2011, c1144
[7] Section 1(2) of the Sovereign Grant Act 2011.

official duties. In fact the only guidance the Act provides on the meaning of official duties is that it includes the maintenance of Royal Palaces and related land.[8] It is far from clear what the Sovereign's official duties are. Even the Royal Household is unable to say exactly what the official duties are:[9]

“The scope and conditions for exercise of the Royal Prerogative are difficult to define comprehensively outside of a specific situation that may prompt their use. This requires the institution of Monarchy to be flexible [...]”

As heir to the throne, William has no formal constitutional role.[10] In that context, it is difficult to see that he has any clearly defined official duties but that seems to be no barrier to his receipt of official funding. Despite the term “Royal Household” being widely used, it is not clear what it means. The Royal Household is not defined in legislation and there is no generally accepted definition of what it means.[11]

Despite the term “Royal Household” being widely used, it is not clear what it means.

When a grant is paid out of public funds, there would normally be a grant agreement clearly setting out what the purpose of the grant is, what the money can be spent on, what it cannot be spent on. In addition, there would normally be a requirement to report back to the funder on how the money was spent and what had been achieved relative to the original aims. These accountability mechanisms are essentially absent for the Sovereign Grant which lacks any clear purpose.

The section of the Sovereign Grant Act that is concerned with interpretation states that *“Any reference to the support of Her Majesty's official duties includes the maintenance of Royal Palaces and related land.”*[12] This may not seem unreasonable at first glance but it actually means that the refurbishment of one of the royals’ private apartments within a Royal Palace

[8] Section 13(8) of the Sovereign Grant Act 2011.
[9] Sovereign Grant Annual Report 2024-25, page 4.
[10] Bogdanor, Vernon, The monarchy and the constitution
[11] 7.122 of Blackstone's Guide to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, John Wadham, Kelly Harris, George Peretz, 2011
[12] Section 13 of the Sovereign Grant Act 2011

counts as performing official duties. In this way, the royals continue to gain a private benefit from public funds. This benefit is also tax free due to the special provisions of the Royal Tax Memorandum.[13]

We do know from the Sovereign Grant Reports that travel from one Royal Palace to another is categorised as official for certain senior royals:
"Travel by The Queen, The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall and The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge between residences is categorised as official."[14]

Most employees in the UK cannot claim a tax deduction for the cost of travelling to work.[15] In sharp contrast to the royals, lowerpaid night shift workers may end up spending a significant proportion of their salary on the costs of getting to and from work and are not entitled to a tax deduction for those costs.

> *How can it be right that when a lower paid worker travels from home to work the expense is deemed to be a private expense but when the royals travel from one home to another home it is deemed to be official and eligible for public funding?*
> *- Republic*

4. A grant like no other

The Government publishes a template framework agreement for public bodies.[16]

The framework agreement used for the Sovereign Grant differs from the standard wording that is generally used in a number of respects. For example, the table below shows the wording on novel and contentious expenditure used in the Royal Household framework agreement with that used by two other public sector bodies.

---

[13] Paragraph 1.8 of Memorandum of Understanding on Royal Taxation, July 2023
[14] Sovereign Grant Annual Report 2021-22, page 17

[15] The HMRC Employment Income Manual states that *"For most people, the place where they live is a matter of personal choice. So the expense of travelling from home to any other place is a consequence of that personal choice, not an objective requirement of their job."*
[16] https://web.archive.org/save/https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62de78dcd3bf7f2d7be17c9a/Template_Framework_Document_-_Public_Corporations.docx

Royal Household framework agreement	Environment Agency's framework agreement	Information Commissioner's Office framework agreement
"any novel or contentious expenditure is cleared with the Treasury before it is undertaken."	*"The Environment Agency shall obtain the department's and where appropriate HM Treasury's prior written approval before: [...] incurring expenditure for any purpose that is or might be considered novel or contentious, or which has or could have significant future cost implications"*	*"the ICO must obtain the Department's approval (where appropriate, dependent on consent from the Treasury) before incurring any expenditure for purposes which are or might be considered novel or contentious or have, or could have, significant future cost implications"*

Some of the differences are quite subtle and outside the context of a side-by-side comparison could easily be overlooked. If we look for example at the text regarding novel and contentious expenditure, in certain cases the Environment Agency and the ICO would each require written approval before incurring expenditure. In the case of the Royal Household, it is sufficient to get 'clearance' which could be given verbally and might take the form of a civil servant noting that the Treasury had no objections without expressly approving the proposed expenditure. In addition, the scope of the rule for the ICO and Environment Agency is expenditure "*that is <u>or might be considered</u> novel or contentious"* (emphasis added). The words *"or might be considered"* do not appear in the Royal Household framework agreement. Further, there is no requirement for the Royal Household to consult in cases where expenditure will have, or could have, significant future cost implications which again differs from the requirements that the Environment Agency and ICO are subject to.

The Royal Household is not required to comply with the Orange Book also known as Management of Risk: Principles and Concepts which is referenced in both the Environment Agency and ICO Framework Agreements. The Orange Book sets out a principles-based approach to the design, implementation and operation of risk management for public sector organisations.[17]

[17] The Orange Book, Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts, UK Government, 2023

The lack of accountability of the monarchy as an institution is due not only to major gaps in accountability mechanisms such as Crown immunity but also to a very large number of small and medium-sized exceptions and exemptions that the Royal Family has managed to secure over many decades.

Taxation

In cases where the money from the Sovereign Grant gives rise to a private benefit for a member of the Royal Family, it would not be taxable under the Royal Tax Memorandum.

"the Sovereign Grant and any facilities provided for The King out of public funds for "Head of State" duties to be disregarded for income tax purposes."[18]

This of course differs from the normal rule that employees and owners of business are taxed on the private benefit they receive from company assets. For example, employees may be taxed on cars, health insurance, entertainment and childcare provided by their employers.[19]

This is unlike any other funding arrangement for a UK public body.

---

5. A flawed funding formula

The Sovereign Grant funding formula is fundamentally flawed. Instead of being funded based on its needs, the Royal Household is funded based on a percentage of the profits from the Crown Estate. This is unlike any other funding arrangement for a UK public body.

Lord Turnbull stated in a House of Lords debate on the Sovereign Grant that[20]

"[...] the link with the Crown Estate. In my view, this link is pretty artificial as there is no relationship between the net income of the Crown Estate and the funding of the monarchy, and there has not been since 1760, when the hereditary revenues of the Crown Estate were first surrendered."

---

[18] Memorandum of Understanding on Royal Taxation, July 2023, section 2.4
[19] Expenses and benefits for employers, HMRC
[20] Hansard HL Deb, 3 October 2011, c966

Lord Turnbull is without doubt an establishment figure having previously served as the head of the civil service, twice recognised in the birthday honours list and made a life peer. Despite being broadly in favour of the bill, Turnbull to his credit nevertheless warned lawmakers about the issues with the funding formula.

The fundamental problem with the funding formula is that it is intended to create confusion in the minds of the press and public by reinforcing two false ideas:

(1) the myth that the revenues of the Crown Estate belong to the monarch in a private capacity; and
(2) that the public is getting a bargain because the public funding of the monarchy is less than 100% of the Crown Estate revenues being surrendered.

The Office for National Statistics classifies the Crown Estate as a public sector body.[21] The Government also acknowledges that the Crown Estate is part of the public sector.[22]

Anything owned by the reigning monarch 'in right of crown' is state property or public property.

Monarchists have tried to argue that because the monarch has surrendered 100% of the profits of the Crown Estate but only receiving back 12% to 25% that this represents a bargain for taxpayers. This is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the concept of Crown ownership. Anything owned by the reigning monarch 'in right of crown' is state property or public property. Perhaps the clearest illustration of this comes from the Osborne Estate Act 1902. In the preamble to the Act, it is stated that the then King (Edward VII) has signified *"His gracious pleasure that, on the occasion of His Coronation, the Osborne estate should be handed over so as to become part of the public property of the Sovereign"*. Section 1 of the Act provides that *"The estate described on the deposited plans, and in this Act referred to as the Osborne estate, shall, by virtue of this Act, become vested in His Majesty in right of the Crown, and shall cease to be part of the private estates of the*

[21] https://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/about-us/governance (accessed 25 October 2025)
[22] *"Finally, there are some entities which are part of the public sector but are not answerable to the Executive function of government that are also excluded from WGA. These include entities such as the Crown Estate and the NAO."* Whole of Government Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024, page 124

Sovereign." What this illustrates is that land held in right of crown is not part of the monarch's private estates but it is in fact public property. There are other examples that demonstrate that 'right of crown' means state ownership. Under the Continental Shelf Act 1964, rights to the continental shelf around the UK were vested in Queen Elizabeth II in right of Crown. During the debate on the Continental Shelf Bill, Frederick Erroll who was the Minister of Power in the Conservative Government at the time stated that:

"The rights in international law, do, however, accrue to the United Kingdom as a state, and it seems to the Government proper to begin the Bill by putting it beyond doubt that these rights are vested in the Crown, or, in the case of coal, in the National Coal Board as the appropriate public body."

It is clear therefore that ownership in right of Crown means UK state ownership and not ownership by Charles in a private capacity.

There are a number of types of Crown land that are not held by the Crown Estate including woodland managed by the Forestry Commission, military bases managed by the Ministry of Defence, courts and prisons managed by the Ministry of Justice and vehicle testing centres run by the Department of Transport.[23] These examples further illustrate that Crown land is owned by the monarch in an official capacity as state property as opposed to being private estates.

King Charles is also Head of State of Canada and Canada also has Crown Lands.[24] Charles does not, however, receive a sovereign grant from any country other than the UK. It is perhaps worth noting also that the Sovereign Grant funding formula takes no account of Crown Estate Scotland revenues.

The Crown Lands Act 1702 references the need to better manage Crown Lands so as to generate more profit for the benefit of taxpayers as opposed to doing so for the personal benefit of the Royal Family:

"other Profits thereof may hereafter be increased and consequently the Burthen upon the Estates of the Subjects of this Realm may be eased and lessened in all future Provisions to be made for the Expences of the Civil Government"

[23] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/crown-development
[24] https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/crown-land

Royal rounding

In step 2 of the statutory formula for the Sovereign Grant, the amount calculated in the previous step is rounded up to the nearest £100,000.[25] The key word here is "up" — the amount calculated in step 1 is either left unchanged or increased, it is never rounded down. Obviously, there can be sound practical reasons for rounding for example it avoids fractions of pence. This was never likely to be an issue for the Sovereign Grant formula because the Crown Estate's financial statements are presented in round millions.[26] Using 2021-22 funding calculation as an example, the starting point for the calculation is the income account net surplus of the Crown Estate from two years earlier 2019-20 of £345,000,000. Unsurprisingly, this figure ends in six zeroes because it is taken from accounts prepared in round millions. The figure is then multiplied by 25% to get to £86,250,000 which most people would view as not requiring further rounding but nevertheless gets rounded to £86,300,000 benefitting the royals by an extra £50,000.

On a long-term view, the royals will gain on average around £50,000 a year just from this bizarre rounding formula.

This is not a coincidence, in a year when the Sovereign Grant percentage was set at 25%, because the Crown Estate's accounts are prepared in millions the calculation would always come up with a figure that is a multiple of £250,000.[27] The percentage used currently is 12% which still guarantees a figure that is divisible by £10,000 and not in need of further rounding.[28] This generous approach contrasts with the Government's guidance on holiday pay calculations for employees which refers to "rounding to the nearest pence".[29]

[25] Section 6(1) of the Sovereign Grant Act 2011.
[26] Page 135, Crown Estate Annual Report 2024/25.
[27] £1,000,000 x 25% = £250,000.
[28] £1,000,000 x 12% = £120,000 which is a multiple of £10,000.
[29]https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/simplifying-holiday-entitlement-and-holiday-pay-calculations/holiday-pay-and-entitlement-reforms-from-1-january-2024

On a long-term view, the royals will gain on average around £50,000 a year just from this bizarre rounding formula.[30] This is around double the annual earnings of a person working full time on minimum wage.

Unspent funds

In general, a public body that does spend a grant in full has to return the unspent funds to the grant making body. The Royal Household however benefits from a special arrangement under which it is allowed to carry forward unspent funds. In theory, this special arrangement exists so that the Royal Household can build up reserves in years where expenditure on repairs is lower so that unspent funds can be carried forward and used to cover future maintenance costs. In reality, the Royal Household has essentially been spending the entire grant each year and then as we have seen comes back periodically for even more money to address a backlog of maintenance issues.

Royal inflation has run at an average of 7.5% a year for the first 12 years from the start of the Sovereign Grant.

6. Royal inflation is out of control

Royal inflation has run at an average of 7.5% a year for the first 12 years from the start of the Sovereign Grant. Regular inflation for the same period was just 2.8% per year on average.[31]

We can also compare royal inflation to changes in the state pension. The basic state pension grew by an average of 3.9% a year between April 2012 and April 2024. Despite the introduction of the 'triple lock' in 2010, Royal inflation has run a substantially higher rate than the state pension.

Minimum wage for 18 to 20 year olds went up by 5.9% per annum on average during the 12 year period from 2013 to 2025.[32]

[30] Depending on the percentage set and the profitability of the Crown Estate in the reference year, the benefit of rounding up can vary from £0 right up to £99,999 with a midpoint of £50,000.
[31] Bank of England inflation calculator, figures for 2013 to 2024
[32] Based on data from National Minimum Wage statistics, Brigid Francis-Devine, House of Commons Library, 12 February 2025

Although many monarchists may try to argue that increased costs are due to higher maintenance costs due to a programme of works at Buckingham Palace, almost every major category of Royal Household expenditure has increased at a rate in excess of general inflation.

The above inflationary spending increases are not due to paying staff working at the Royal Household more generously. The average payroll costs per employee have only increased by 2.4% a year between 2012-13 and 2024-25 which is actually lower than inflation of 2.8%.

The Sovereign Grant was introduced while George Osborne was Chancellor and David Cameron was Prime Minister. It is perhaps ironic that two politicians who regularly used household finances as an analogy to support Government spending cuts as part of austerity were also the architects of a system that has led to out of control expenditure by the Royal Household.[33]

The savings never materialised, instead the cost of the Royal Household has increased at a rate well above the rate of inflation.

Internal Treasury papers released under FOI show that in 2012, the Treasury were expecting savings following the introduction of the Sovereign Grant:

"The move to a consolidated grant should provide scope for further efficiency savings in the coming years."

The savings never materialised, instead the cost of the Royal Household has increased at a rate well above the rate of inflation. Senior officials at the Royal Household may be criticised for overspending and the Treasury may be criticised for its failure to intervene but ultimately, it is the royal family that are in charge of the Royal Household and therefore ultimately the ones who should be held to account.

[33] A government is not a household, Frank Van Lerven and Andrew Jackson, New Economics Foundation (accessed 19 October 2025)

One area where they have cut back is on dropping plans for the creation of an external visitor centre. Ironically, this is arguably the one area of spending that would have directly benefitted the British public as opposed to the royals.[34]

Historical comparisons

The concept of the Civil List originated in the late 1600s.[35] The first Civil List Act was passed in 1697 and as a result William and Mary (who were the joint monarchs at the time), received £700,000 a year to meet both royal expenses and the cost of government.[36] In the 1760s, the Government took over funding of the armed forces, the secret service and the judiciary from George III in exchange for the surrender of the Crown Estate.[37] Originally, as the name Civil List implies, the funding covered the full cost of civil government (i.e. the non-military part of government) – it was a list of civil charges.

Parliamentary funding for the monarch increased by 565% in real terms from when Elizabeth II became Queen until 2024-2025.

In the 1830s, the Civil List was for the first time intended only to cover royal expenditure and not the full cost of civil government. It was set at the lower level of £510,000 for Willam IV who was King at the time. In today's money, that would equate to around £51 million which is considerably lower than the £132 million of Sovereign Grant income that the royals will receive for 2025-26.

When Queen Elizabeth II became Queen in 1952, the Civil List was set at £475,000 which is around £12 million in today's money.[38] In the early 1950s, there was also an annuity of £40,000 for the Queen's husband (the then Duke of Edinburgh) and annuities for Queen Elizabeth II's children on reaching the age of 21 of £6,000 to £15,000 depending on their gender and marital status. Parliament could not of course have known at the time how much this arrangement would ultimately cost but if we assume the annuities were intended to add a further £100,000 to the public funding of the royal family that would amount to £575,000

[34] https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/royal-household-spending-and-accountability.pdf
[35] https://www.britannica.com/topic/Civil-List
[36] Parliamentary Papers. (1831). United Kingdom: H.M. Stationery Office.
[37] ... And What Do You Do?, Norman Baker (2019)
[38] HC Deb, 10 July 1952, c1644 https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=1952-07-10a.1644.4

— less than £15 million in today's money. Throughout the remainder of the 1950s none of the Queen's children were old enough to be paid an annuity putting the total annual cost of Civil List funding for the monarchy at £515,000 in 1952 or £13 million in today's money. Incredibly, the Parliamentary funding for the monarch increased by 565% in real terms from when Elizabeth II became Queen until 2024-2025.

7. Doing less with more

> *At a time when UK public bodies are being challenged to do more with less, the Royal Household is doing less with more.*
> *- Republic*

In the previous section, we saw that there was a very substantial increase in the public funding for the monarchy. In that context, the question naturally arises as to whether royals and the Royal Household are doing more than they did in the 1950s. In the early part of Queen Elizabeth II's reign, officials in the Royal Household were responsible for censorship of theatres but this came to an end in 1968. The Royal Household's role as a licensing authority for public houses in the vicinity of Buckingham Palace was brought to an end by the Licensing Act 2003. The office of coroner for the Royal Household was abolished in 2013. In summary, the Royal Household lost regulatory, licensing and judicial responsibilities during the reign of Elizabeth II. In addition, in 1993 the responsibility for the maintenance and conservation of the Royal Collection was given to the Royal Collection Trust which is largely funded from ticket sales which ought to have further reduced the Royal Household's need for Government funding.[39]

The role of the British monarchy continues to shrink in the UK and abroad but the costs keep going up.

[39] https://www.rct.uk/about/royal-collection-trust

From an international perspective, when Elizabeth took the throne in 1952, she was Head of State of South Africa, Pakistan and modern day Sri Lanka. Barbados became a Republic in 2021 and further countries in the Commonwealth look set to follow. The role of the British monarchy continues to shrink in the UK and abroad but the costs keep going up.

Comparisons to other countries

The Spanish Royal Household (la Casa Real) receives around €8 million or £7 million in state funding.[40] The budget for the Irish Presidency is around €6 million or £5 million.[41] In short, the financing arrangements of the British monarchy are unlike those of any other European state, republic or monarchy, and are in urgent need of modernisation and reform.

8. Value for money

> *People who are struggling financially are often told to ask three questions before spending money: Do I need it? Can I afford it? Can I get it cheaper elsewhere? The monarchy fails all three tests. We don't need it, we can't afford it and there are cheaper and better alternatives.*
>
> *- Republic*

As the Sovereign Grant has no clear purpose and as there are no meaningful performance indicators within the Sovereign Grant Report, there is nothing to support the view that the Sovereign Grant represents good value for money.

On the publication of the Sovereign Grant Report of 2024-25, the Keeper of the Privy Purse, James Chalmers, said:[42]

"Soft power is hard to measure but its value is, I believe, now firmly understood at home and abroad, as the core themes of the new reign have come into even sharper focus, and the Royal Family have continued in their service to the nation, Realms and Commonwealth."

[40] https://www.casareal.es/ES/Transparencia/informacioneconomica/Paginas/organizacion-y-presupuesto_presupuestos.aspx

[41] https://www.irishtimes.com/politics/2025/10/22/cost-of-running-presidents-office-set-to-rise-to-over-6m-next-year/

[42] Financial reports 2024-25, Royal Household website (accessed 19 October 2025).

The reference to unmeasurable soft power raises more questions than it answers:

- How do we know £500 million a year is the right amount to pay for the soft power the UK is getting?
- Would we get more value if we invested the same amount in the British film industry?
- If the work the royals do is so valuable to the UK then why don't they do more of it?
- Is the association of the UK with monarchy helpful in countries with painful memories of European imperialism and colonialism?
- Would anyone seriously suggest that the actions of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor are likely to have enhanced the UK's standing internationally?

In the 17th century, the people were expected to believe in the divine right of kings even though it could neither be seen nor tested, it would seem that the unmeasurable soft power of the Windsor family is the 21st century equivalent.

Many public bodies including state schools and hospital trusts struggle with budgetary constraints but few are lucky enough to be able to pass the cost to another public body.

In 2011, the Sovereign Grant was brought in to replace previous public funding arrangements including grant-in-aid for royal travel by air and rail. It might therefore be reasonable for the public to expect that flights would be paid for out of the Sovereign Grant. In fact, some air travel is still being paid for by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.[43] This included the cost of the King's trip to the United Arab Emirates for COP28.[44] The reason given was that these visits *"were at the request of Government but could not be accommodated within the Royal Household's budget"*.[45] Many public bodies including state schools and hospital trusts struggle with budgetary constraints but few are lucky enough to be able to pass the cost to another public body.

In the Sovereign Grant report for 2024-5, the Royal Household references the number of royal events in the 'performance against objectives' section. We have found examples of

[43] Sovereign Grant Report 2023-24, page 26
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

local councils covering the costs of individuals attending royal garden parties from public funds.[46] It is hard to assess value for money in cases where some of the information relating to the organisation's performance covers activities that are not fully funded by the organisation.

> *There are at least seven Government Departments and other public bodies that are funding the royals and their activities directly using public money in addition to the Sovereign Grant.*

The Coronation

The vast majority of the costs of the Coronation was paid by Government Departments and not from the Sovereign Grant. This resulted in an additional bill to the taxpayer reported to be £72 million, although that figure only included certain costs and other estimates ranged from £150m to £250m. The Coronation was unnecessary. Charles became King the instant that Queen Elizabeth II died. The British monarchy is the last monarchy in Europe to have a coronation.[47]

Failing to protect our heritage

The Royal Mausoleum in Windsor is on the heritage at risk register.[48] The Royal Household should be using the Sovereign Grant money to maintain buildings of historical importance and keeping them out of the at risk register.

9. Hidden royal spending

There are at least seven Government Departments and other public bodies that are funding the royals and their activities directly using public money in addition to the Sovereign Grant. These are listed below:

---

46 Freedom of Information response, Caerphilly County Borough Council, 12 March 2025

47 https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/king-charles-coronation-differences-european-monarchies-b1077467.html

48 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/49464

- Cabinet Office
- Crown Estate
- Department for Culture, Media & Sport
- Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Home Office
- Ministry of Defence

Further to the above, costs are incurred by local councils and police forces in connection with royal visits.

Responses received make it clear that Central Government is not keeping track of the total amount being spent in support of the Royal Household and the monarchy.

Republic's researchers submitted FOI requests to a large number of UK Government Departments to ask about the costs they incurred supporting the Royal Household.[49] Nine departments refused to provide the information citing a number of exemptions including personal data, commercial confidence and the royal correspondence exemption.[50] Others claimed not to organise their records in such a way as to enable the information to be provided.[51] As well as further demonstrating Whitehall's reluctance to release any information about the royals, the responses received make it clear that Central Government is not keeping track of the total amount being spent in support of the Royal Household and the monarchy. Without a clear view on the total cost, monarchists and republicans alike should review any claims that the royals represent good value for money with great scepticism.

[49] FOI requests sent by Republic researchers in Q4 2024 and related correspondence.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.

10. The least transparent part of the public sector

The royals have been given multiple exemptions from FOI law making the monarchy one of the least transparent parts of the public sector. The lack of transparency limits the ability of journalists, campaigners and MPs to hold them to account.

> *Republic's view is that people in a position of power and privilege should be subject to more scrutiny than others, not less.*
> *- Republic*

Exemptions from Freedom of Information laws

The Royal Household is not listed as a public authority for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This means that unlike other bodies forming part of Central Government, journalists, researchers and campaigners cannot submit FOI requests to the Royal Household. While the Sovereign Grant report itself is published, it is not possible to make FOI requests for any further detail. For example, it is not possible to obtain copies of purchase invoices or expenses claims or to access contracts and correspondence with suppliers. In addition, it is not possible to view the Royal Household's policies and procedures with respect to the spending of public money or to read the minutes of the meetings where financial decisions are being made.

> *We are not allowed to see the detail — and it's the detail that really matters.*

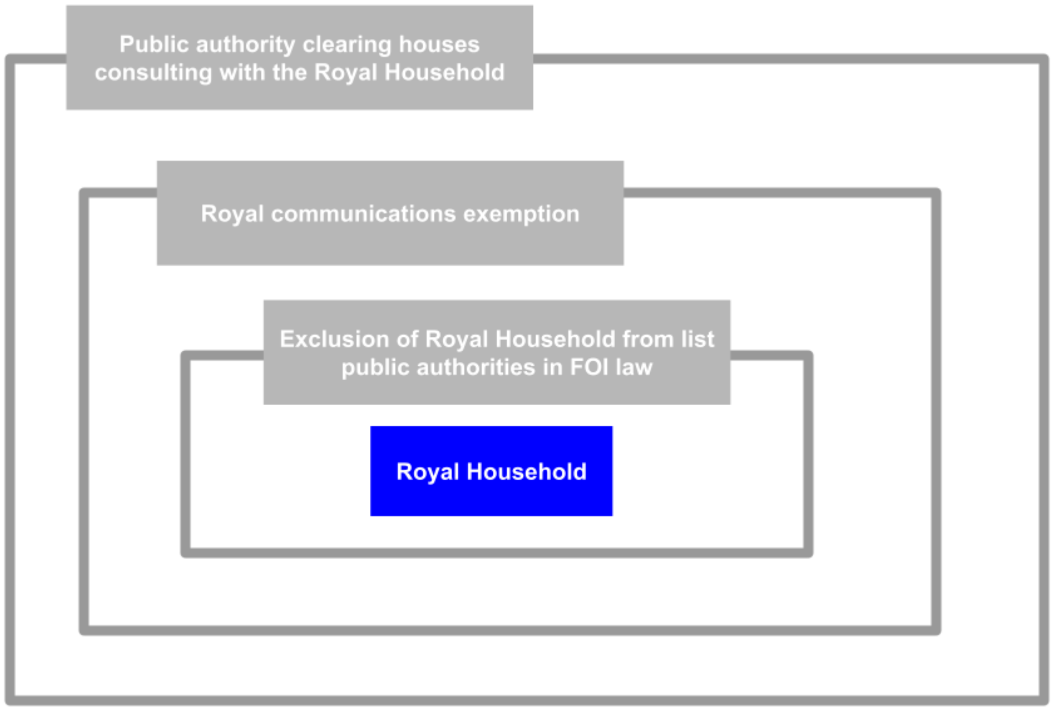
It is worth remembering that the MPs expense scandal was not caused by the publication of the total cost of MPs expenses which had been known for some time but rather by the publication of detailed information on what individuals had claimed for such as duck houses, moat cleaning and flipping second homes.[52] Whilst the Sovereign Grant Report provides

[52] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48187096

aggregate totals for certain classes of expenditure, we are not allowed to see the detail — and it's the detail that really matters.

Even for bodies that are subject to FOI that hold information about the activities of the royals and the cost of the monarchy there is a continual risk of interference from the Royal Household and the Cabinet Office. When an FOI request about protection of members of the royal family is sent to a local police force in the UK it follows a special process whereby it is forwarded to the National Police Chief's Council's FOI Clearing House. In turn, the Clearing House regularly consults with the Royal Household.[53]

The layers of secrecy surrounding the Royal Household



One relatively recent example of an intervention by the Cabinet Office resulted in minutes discussing Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor when he held the role of UK trade envoy being kept secret.[54]

[53] https://www.npcc.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/publications/disclosure-logs/digital-data-and-technology-coordination-committee/2025/2300-2025-04-npcc-manual-of-guidance-v.8.1-january-2025-10062025.pdf

[54] Cabinet Office accused of covering up for royal family after blocking release of Andrew documents, Guardian, 30 December 2025

Conflicts of interest

MPs and members of the House of Lords complete a register of interests. Similarly, local councillors are required to declare their personal interests.[55]

If a bill before Parliament has no impact on William in his capacity as Duke of Cornwall then it will proceed through Parliament without his involvement. If on the other hand, the bill impacts William's interests as the Duke of Cornwall then it may be necessary to obtain William's consent before the bill can be passed into law.

Similar rules apply to Charles where there is a requirement to secure "King's Consent" for bills which impact the Duchy of Lancaster. This is different to Royal Assent which is required for all Acts of Parliament whether or not they impact on the Duchy of Lancaster.

In general, public officials will withdraw from a decision in which they have an interest. With Charles and William the opposite is true.

The King of Spain (Felipe VI) made public his personal assets in 2022.[56] The British royal family has yet to do so. It was reported that Felipe's assets amounted to around 2.3 million euros (or around £2.0 million) in savings, current accounts and securities. Charles and William each receive over ten times that amount every year in income from the duchies.[57] They would only need to have saved a small fraction of their annual income each year to be an order of magnitude wealthier than Felipe and yet there is no transparency over their financial interests.

In general, public officials will withdraw from a decision in which they have an interest. With Charles and William the opposite is true.

[55] Openness and transparency on personal interests — A guide for councillors, UK Government (accessed 19 October 2025)

[56] https://apnews.com/article/europe-arts-and-entertainment-spain-king-felipe-vi-juan-carlos-a2024ad8491c8bb7656730af31e2eb4d

[57] Calls for King and William's duchies to be abolished to create 'national estate', Independent

Open spending data

Local councils publish expenditure over £500. Councils also publish registers of contracts. Central Government publishes expenditure over £25,000. The guidance specifically excludes payments to the Royal Household.[58] The reason given is *"Confidential information exempt under FOI"*. This reasoning does not stand up to any serious scrutiny. There is a general exemption in FOI law for communications with the Royal Household and the Royal Family but the exemption does not extend to payments. In any event, the royal communications exemption is only engaged in specific cases where the public interest favours non-disclosure. It simply isn't the case that there is a blanket exemption in FOI law preventing the publication of payments to the Royal Household. The lack of openness about spending on the Royal Household is a result of political decisions made by Government Ministers and the King.

Publication of policies

In the UK, state schools are required to publish a complaints policy and information on compliance with the public sector equality duty.[59] The Royal Household publishes neither. How can it be right that the Royal Household which receives over £500 million a year of taxpayers' money is held to a lower standard of transparency than a small village primary school.

Access to archives

The Royal Archives are effectively closed to researchers and academics have claimed that the monarchy is more secretive than MI5 or the CIA.[60]

Lobbying transparency

Members of the Royal Household are excluded from the Government's lobbying transparency disclosures.[61]

---

58 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a821d93ed915d74e6235dd7/guidance_for_publishing_spend.pdf

59 https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online (accessed 25 October 2025)

60 What the royal family can learn from MI5 about secrecy, 2015, Philip Murphy at and Letters to the editor, The Times, 2016, Alex Von Tunzelmann.

61 Ministerial gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings with external organisations in Department for Work and Pensions

Funding of legal settlements

In October 2025, Rachael Maskell, the MP for York Central, called on the royal family to explain how Prince Andrew funded a settlement in a sexual abuse case brought by Virginia Giuffre.[62]

[62] York MP calls on royal family to explain source of £12m Virginia Giuffre payment, Guardian, 18 October 2025

	Government Departments	**Local councils**	**NHS trusts**	**Police**	**State schools**	**Royal Household**
Freedom of information	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	✕
Published register of interests	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	✕
Open spending data	☑	☑	☑	☑	✕	✕
Lobbying transparency	☑	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕
Accessible archives	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	✕

11. Public assets and private benefits

One of the biggest concerns we have about the Sovereign Grant arrangements and the arrangements for funding the monarchy more widely is the lack of a clear distinction between public and private assets.

For the purposes of the Sovereign Grant Act 2011, it is stated that references to the Royal Household is *"limited to that Household so far as it is concerned with the support of Her Majesty's official duties"* this would seem to imply that the Royal Household also supports members of the Royal Family in a private capacity but the lines have not been clearly drawn.

The Royal Collection

The Royal Collection Trust is a UK registered charity based at St James's Palace whose objects include maintaining and conserving the Royal Collection. The Royal Collection consists of over one million objects. The Office for National Statistics has classified the Royal Collection Trust as a public body.

The Royal Collection includes over 450,000 photographs.[63] The collection also includes paintings, jewelry, clocks, books, furniture and other antiques.[64]

[63] https://www.rct.uk/collection/about-the-collection
[64] Page 103 of Royal Mint - National Debt, Norman Baker

“So as to make the status of the royal collection clear, Her Majesty intends that the maintenance, conservation and presentation to the public of the royal collection should in future become the responsibility of a new charitable trust.”
HC Deb, 11 February 1993, c1113

“the Royal Collection Trust’s payment to the Royal Household will be either based on the pre-existing formula or 20% of the admissions income at Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace, whichever is higher.”[65]

In our view, the trustees of the Royal Collection Trust should be asking why the payment from the charity increases based on visitor numbers? If the Royal Household is charging the charity for services provided, including staff time, this ought to be set at the market rate for those services and not set based on visitor numbers.

Royal Household website	**Royal Collection Trust’s website**
“Estimates of The King’s wealth often mistakenly include items which are held by him as Sovereign on behalf of the nation and are not his private property. These include the official Royal residences, the majority of art treasures from the Royal Collection and the Crown Jewels. The King cannot sell these – they must pass to his successor as Sovereign.”[66]	*“The Royal Collection is held in trust by The King as Sovereign for his successors and the nation. It is not owned by him as a private individual.”*[67]

There would appear to be a contradiction here. The statement on the Royal Household website uses the word “majority” suggesting that part of the Royal Collection is the private property of the King but the Royal Collection Trust’s website implies that the entire collection is owned in an official capacity.

[65] https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/royal-household-spending-and-accountability.pdf

[66] Guide to royal finances, Royal Household https://www.royal.uk/royal-finances
[67] https://web.archive.org/web/20230801141649/https://www.rct.uk/collection/about-the-collection

This naturally raises a number of important questions. For example, which art treasures belong to the state and which are private property? What controls are in place to ensure there is no confusion of public and private property? Are public funds being used to meet the costs of maintaining, securing and insuring the private assets?

Some assets held by the monarch in an official capacity (in right of Crown) are inalienable, meaning the monarch cannot gift or sell them. It would surely be helpful to have a public list of what these assets are and who is responsible for the safe keeping yet no such list has ever been published.

12. The accountability gap

> *You can have deference or you can have accountability but you can't have both.*
> *- Republic*

The Royal Family's unofficial motto is *"never complain, never explain"*. The Windsor family have little to complain about when it comes to finances but explanations are essential to financial accountability.

The manner in which the monarchy interacts with Parliament is not conducive to effective scrutiny. Instead of asking MPs to examine the evidence and make an objective decision on bills regarding royal finances the royals instead choose to remind MP's of their supposed 'attachment' to the Windsor family:[68]

"In commending these matters to Her faithful Commons, Her Majesty relies on their attachment to Her person and family to adopt such measures as may be suitable for the occasion."

The role of the Accounting Officer

An Accounting Officer is a senior official of a UK public sector organisation who manages the

[68] Hansard HC Deb, 29 June 2011, c976

day-to-day business of the organisation.

Usually, the accounting officer is the permanent secretary or Chief Executive Officer. In the case of the Royal Household, the Accounting Officer is the Keeper of the Privy Purse. The Accounting Officer is personally responsible for managing the organisation efficiently and effectively and reporting to Parliament however in the case of the Royal Household the Parliamentary accountability falls to Government Ministers.

It is the Treasury Ministers who are responsible to Parliament for the Sovereign Grant and not the Sovereign or even the Keeper of the Privy Purse who essentially acts as the Royal Household's CEO.[69] We also know that the Royal Family has resisted the Royal Household being run by ministers as a Government Department.[70] In this way, the Royal Family has succeeded in retaining power over the Royal Household but relinquishing the accountability.

The framework agreement

The framework agreement for a public body sets out how the money received from public funds should be used and what safeguards are required to be in place. There is a framework agreement for the Sovereign Grant funding received by the Royal Household from the Treasury but it omits a number of important clauses that generally appear in UK Central Government framework agreements.

The framework agreement for the Royal Household makes no reference to responsibilities to the public despite the very substantial amount of public funding received every year. In addition, there is a special exception allowing the Royal Household to depart from the principles of Managing Public Money in certain circumstances. There is no equivalent exception for the National Archives for example.

Royal Household framework agreement	**National Archives framework agreement**
"Unless agreed by the Treasury, the Royal Household shall follow the principles, rules, guidance and advice in Managing Public	*"Responsibilities to Parliament and the public include: [...]* *Acting in accordance with the terms of MPM and other instructions and guidance issued*

[69] Framework Agreement relating to the Sovereign Grant, 5 March 2022, paragraph 4.
[70] Finances of the Monarchy, House of Commons Library Briefing Paper, David Torrance and Lorna Booth

Money, referring any difficulties or potential bids for exceptions to the Treasury Officer of Accounts in the Treasury in the first instance."	*from time to time by DCMS, the Treasury and the Cabinet Office"*

The role of the Lord Chamberlain's Committee

In the Sovereign Grant Report, the Lord Chamberlain's Committee is presented as being a Board composed of executive and non-executive members that oversees the work of the Royal Household. The NAO has stated that the Committee *"operates as the executive board for the Royal Household"* which brings into question whether the members are sufficiently independent from the management of the Royal Household. As at 31 March 2024, there were around 11 members of the Lord Chamberlain's Committee. Six are described as executives while the remaining five including the Chair are described as non-executive. According to the UK Financial Reporting Council's Corporate Governance Code *"At least half the board, excluding the chair, should be non-executive directors whom the board considers to be independent"*.[71] On the face of it, it might appear that the Royal Household almost satisfies this provision of the Code. It is however important to understand who the non-executive members were:

- Lord Parker of Minsmere;
- Ian Patrick;
- Lt. Col. Tom White;
- Sharmila Nebhrajani; and
- Carol Hui.

Lord Parker was the Lord Chamberlain at the time. The Lord Chamberlain's Office is one of the four Departments of the Royal Household[72] and in that context it is hard to see how the Lord Chamberlain can be seen as fully independent of the day-to-day running of the Royal Household. Mr Patrick is the Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales and therefore held an executive role in William's household which also benefits from Sovereign Grant funding. Similarly, Lt. Col. Tom White was the Private Secretary to the Princess of Wales. Ms Nebhrajani was a non-executive director of Coutts Bank[73] which is known to be the bank

[71] Provision 11, UK Corporate Governance Code
[72] Sovereign Grant report 2023-24, page 102
[73] https://www.severntrent.com/about-us/governance/our-leadership-team/sharmila-nebhrajani/

used by the British royal family.[74] In addition, Nebhrajani is the person the Treasury appointed to chair the Sovereign Grant Audit Committee.[75] Therefore, four of the five members described as non-executive have some form of connection with the Sovereign Grant or Royal Family outside of their membership of the Committee. Whilst there is no suggestion of any wrongdoing by any of the individuals named, the arrangements as a whole are in our view insufficient to ensure robust challenge of spending from Sovereign Grant funding.

Regardless of the composition of the Lord Chamberlain's Committee, the monarch has the power to appoint and dismiss Committee members and there is nothing in the available documentation to suggest that the Committee has the power to overrule the monarch on matters relating to the running of the Royal Household or any other matters. In fact, we know that senior appointments to the Royal Household are made under royal prerogative and have been considered *"a personal matter for the monarch since 1924"*.[76]

It is clear therefore that in reality Charles retains full control over the Royal Household and its expenditure. Whilst the Royal Household seeks to present itself as adhering to modern standards of corporate governance with non-executives and an audit committees, beneath this thin veneer is an unaccountable institution where power is concentrated in the monarch just as it was in mediaeval times.

Internal audit

The Head of Internal Audit's annual audit opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the risk management, control and governance processes for 2024-25 was "Moderate". This is defined as meaning that *"Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control"*. In the 2025-26 report, it was also noted that the Internal Audit functions view was that *"improvements [are] required in some areas".*

External audit

For a Central Government body such as the Royal Household, there are essentially two opinions within the audit report. The first is about the reliability of the numbers in the

[74] https://www.theguardian.com/news/2023/jul/20/farage-affair-is-a-monumental-pr-disaster-for-exclusive-bank-coutts
[75] https://www.coutts.com/why-coutts/coutts-today.html
[76] The royal prerogative and ministerial advice, House of Commons Library

accounts. The second opinion, called the "regularity opinion" is about whether public money has been spent properly.

"In my opinion, in all material respects, the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them."

In the case of the Royal Household, the regularity opinion is of limited value because neither the Sovereign Grant Act 2011 nor the framework agreement set out clear criteria for what money should be spent on.

"Value for money reports
Our value for money reports examine government expenditure in order to form a judgement on whether value for money has been achieved. We also make recommendations to public bodies on how to improve public services."
Page 4, NAO report

If you read page 4 of the NAO report you could be forgiven for thinking that the report into the Royal Household was part of a series of reports into public bodies which (1) consider whether value for money has been achieved and (2) make recommendations where appropriate.

Only by reading the detail in Appendix One of the NAO report would you learn that in fact the report does neither:

"We have not conducted an evaluative review of the Grant and have not sought to make a value-for-money conclusion or to make recommendations."

The text on page 4 is standard wording used by the NAO in a number of reports. It very clearly illustrates the level of scrutiny that should be being applied to the Royal Household but isn't.

The NAO report provides a helpful summary of the current funding arrangements based largely on information that is already in the public domain. The report does not however include details of the testing carried out as part of the review or its findings. There is little evidence to suggest that rigorous review or challenge has taken place.

Of every £100 spent on royal funding that appears in the Sovereign Grant report a further £41 is received by Charles and William from the duchies that is not subject to scrutiny by the National Audit Office. In addition, there has been very limited scrutiny of the royal's use of public owned buildings as their personal residences where a market rate of rent is not paid — a benefit worth tens of millions of pounds a year to the Windsor family.

Royal Trustees

The Royal Trustees are not like a scrutiny committee with members of opposition parties. They are not like a plc with non-executive directors.

Parliamentary scrutiny

In the UK, Parliament has the power to hold ministers and officials to account by asking questions and highlighting issues in debates. These arrangements are central to our democracy. The ability of individual MPs to scrutinise the Royal Family is however significantly constrained as *"No question can be put [...] which casts reflections upon the Sovereign or the royal family."* In October 2025, the Speaker clarified the rules stating that *"criticism of members of the royal family cannot be made as part of questions."*

Media scrutiny

Like Parliamentarians, the media also face restrictions when it comes to talking about the royals. The use of FOI is a valuable tool for journalists but one that is of limited use when it comes to the Royal Household due to the various exceptions and exemptions that exist to benefit the royals (see also section 8 of this report). Members of the press who wish to attend and report on royal events need to join the Royal Rota — the press pool that follows the British royal family.[77] Media outlets, photographers and reporters taking part in the Royal Rota are subjective to prescriptive obligations which even go as far as to specify a dress code:

"For formal royal rota occasions taking place indoors, lounge suit with shirt and tie for men, discreet day attire for women."[78]

[77] https://newsmediauk.org/Industry-Services/Royal-Rota/ (accessed 3 January 2025)
[78] Ibid.

There is no transparency over how places on the Royal Rota are assigned and inevitably there will be concerns that access to royal events is being exchanged for favourable media coverage.

In 2023, it was revealed that the royal family had the power to censor the BBC's coverage of the coronation raising serious questions with regards to editorial independence.[79] In some cases, the royals have the right to veto the reuse of footage from events and services.[80] The Royal Household also restricts media access to the Royal Archives unlike the National Archives where documents are readily available to journalists, academics and researchers. The Royal Archive describes itself as a private archive despite the fact it contains official state documents of historical importance.[81]

13. Where the Sovereign Grant Report falls short

The total cost of monarchy has many different elements including security costs, the opportunity cost of the buildings occupied by the royals not paying market rents and costs met directly by Government Departments. The single biggest problem with the Sovereign Grant Report is that it doesn't even come close to showing the full cost of the monarchy to the UK tax payer.

We have identified eight specific areas where the level of disclosure in the Sovereign Grant Report falls short. These are:

- Royal residences.
- Royal travel.
- Governance and decision-making.
- Complaints and whistleblowing.
- Prevention of financial crime.
- Recruitment to senior roles.
- Related party transactions.
- Secondments.
- Spending on major projects.

[79] Revealed: royal family has power to censor BBC coronation coverage, Guardian, 5 May 2023.
[80] Royal family given veto on use of footage of Queen's funeral, Guardian, 22 September 2022.

[81] https://www.royal.uk/sites/default/files/media-packs/rlra_guide_to_collections.pdf

- Standards in public life.

Royal residences

Funds from the Sovereign Grant are used to maintain the following which are referred to as the Occupied Royal Palaces:[82][83]

- Buckingham Palace;
- St James's Palace;
- Clarence House;
- Marlborough House Mews;
- The residential and office areas of Kensington Palace;
- The Royal Mews and Royal Paddocks at Hampton Court;
- Windsor Castle; and
- the buildings in the Home and Great Parks at Windsor.

There is not, however, a full list of the individual buildings whose maintenance is funded from public money under the Sovereign Grant. Some of these sites include multiple residences and currently the public has no way to know who is living there and what rent, if any, they are paying.[84] There are also buildings owned by the Crown Estate that are occupied by the royals but these fall outside the scope of this report.

Royal travel

For 2024-25, details of travel paid for from public funds were given only for journeys costing £17,000 or more. [85] There would be no transparency at all if a royal made five journeys to the same location each costing £15,000. Unlike other public officials, the gaps in published data cannot be filled in by journalists and researchers making FOI requests because the Royal Household is outside the scope of Freedom of Information law (see also section 8 of this report).

Governance and decision-making

There are no clear performance indicators in the Royal Household's Annual Report. It is really unclear what the Royal Household's management are trying to achieve and how success and failure is measured. The Lord Chamberlain's Committee appears to be the

[82] Sovereign Grant Annual Report 2024-25, page 123.
[83] Explanatory Notes to the Sovereign Grant Act 2011, paragraph 89.
[84] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1192945 (accessed 25 October 2025)
[85] Sovereign Grant Annual Report 2024-25, Royal Travel appendix.

closest equivalent to a governing body for the Royal Household. There is however no clear statement of responsibilities for the Committee.

The UK Corporate Governance Code recommends that board memberships are refreshed regularly.[86] The Royal Household says that is not possible for the governing body of the Royal Household due to *“the nature of the roles held by members of the Lord Chamberlain’s Committee and their relationships with Members of the Royal Family,”*

Complaints and whistleblowing

The Environment Agency publishes data on complaints, information requests and whistleblowing reports received each year (page 85-87 of the Environment Agency’s 2022-23 Annual Report). The Royal Household’s Annual Report does not provide any information on the complaints, information requests and whistleblowing reports it receives.

Prevention of financial crime

The Environment Agency publishes information on suspicious activity (money laundering) reports to the National Crime Agency and information on the steps taken to help combat money laundering (page 89 of the Environment Agency’s 2022-23 Annual Report). The Royal Household does not provide information on suspicious activity reports or the steps it takes to prevent money laundering. Some monarchists may try to argue that this is not an area of risk for the Royal Household but we would strongly disagree. The UK Financial Conduct Authority guidance on money laundering includes Heads of State as an example of a politically exposed person (PEP) who together with members of their immediate family should be the subject of enhanced scrutiny by financial institutions with regards to the prevention of financial crime.[87] Charles is Head of State in the UK and in 14 other countries meaning that he and his close family members should face enhanced scrutiny. The UK rules in this area are not unusual and align to the definition of PEP set out in the International Standards issued by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).[88] In June 2022, the Guardian reported that Charles had been given €3m in cash in bags during meetings with a senior Qatari politician. In this instance, he set a poor example to those working in the Royal Household.

Recruitment to senior roles

The Royal Household refuses to disclose how senior positions are filled. We are not allowed

[86] Principle K, UK Corporate Governance Code 2018 and 2024.
[87] FG 17/6 The treatment of politically exposed persons for anti-money laundering purposes, July 2017
[88] International Standards on Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation, Financial Action Task Force, October 2025.

to know which if any external search consultancy used for the recruitment of senior officials.[89] This is contrary to the recommendations of the UK Corporate Governance Code.[90]

Related party transactions

It is not clear whether members of the Royal Family other than the King are regarded as related parties of the Royal Household for the purposes of the Sovereign Grant Report. Has the Royal Household used the Sovereign Grant to pay for services from William or Kate or lent money to Andrew? We simply have no way to know.

Secondments

The Environment Agency discloses the number of employees seconded in and out of the Agency in the year (page 104 of the 2022-23 Annual Report of the Environment Agency). The Royal Household does not make this information available.

Spending on major projects

The level of transparency over public funds being spent on projects has decreased over time as the Royal Household regularly redefines major project in a way that results in less information being disclosed:

"Major projects were defined as those >£250k in 2017-18, increasing to >£350k in 2018-19, >£400k in 2022-23 and to £500k in 2024-25." [Footnote 23 on page 25 of the Sovereign Grant Report 2024-25.]

Standards in public life

The Royal Household does not claim to follow the 'code of good practice' for Corporate governance in UK Central Government departments. Instead the Royal Household applies the UK Corporate Governance Code which is designed for companies in the private sector. This is questionable given that the Royal Household is categorised as a public body by the Office for National Statistics and receives millions of pounds of public money each year.

The code of good practice document states that: *"All board members should uphold the seven principles of public life (the Nolan principles): selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership."* The Royal Household states in its 2024-25 Annual Report that it endorses the Nolan Principles of public life but it does not go as far as to say that it upholds these principles. The code of good practice also states that: *"The*

[89] Sovereign Grant Report 2024-25, page 74.
[90] UK Corporate Governance Code 2018 and 2024, provision 20.

board should publish, in its governance statement, all relevant interests of individual board members and how any identified conflicts, and potential conflicts, of interest of board members have been managed." The Royal Household does not disclose the conflicts of interests of members of its governing body in its Annual Report or those of the monarch himself.

14. The long overdue review

Every year, MPs have an opportunity to check the maths of how the Sovereign Grant was calculated by the Royal Trustees but there is no opportunity provided for debate of the funding formula itself or whether the Royal Household's spending represents good value for money. Every five years, the Royal Trustees are required to review whether the percentage of Crown Estate profits remains appropriate and any increases need to be approved by the House of Commons. The table below summarises the annual and the five-yearly review cycles.

Every year	**Every five years** (on the five-year periods ending 2016, 2021, 2026, 2031)
● The Royal Trustees determine the amount of the Sovereign Grant based on a five-step formula. ○ This is essentially a mathematical exercise based on a formula set by law. ○ This is done under Section 6 of the Sovereign Grant Act 2011 ("the Act"). ● The Royal Trustees prepare a report that is given to the Treasury and laid before Parliament. ○ In this report, the Trustees have to show the result of the Grant calculation and how the amount was calculated and ● The Sovereign Grant report is published. ○ e.g. the accounts for the 12 months to March 2024 were published in July 2024 ● The National Audit Office audits the accounts.	● The Royal Trustees must review whether the percentage being applied to Crown Estate profits is appropriate. ○ This requires the Trustees to exercise judgement. ○ This is done under Section 7 of the Sovereign Grant Act 2011. ● The Royal Trustees Report is given to the Treasury and laid before Parliament. ○ In this report, the Trustees have to explain their conclusions. ● Any increases in the percentage would need to be agreed by the House of Commons (by passing a Statutory Instrument). ● Decreases would be subject to the negative resolution procedure meaning that it is unlikely there will be a debate. ● If the rate stays the same, there would be no opportunity for debate.

The Royal Trustees are the Prime Minister, the Chancellor and the Keeper of the Privy Purse. The Keeper of the Privy Purse is essentially the CEO of the Royal Household which is mainly funded by the Sovereign Grant. There is no-one independent of the Government and the Royal Household involved in the review process. This is in sharp contrast to oversight and scrutiny committees in UK local government that generally include representatives of more than one political party.

The Act does not provide any requirements or guidelines as to how the Royal Trustees should determine an appropriate percentage.

15. Recommendations

Republic remains committed to its primary goal of abolishing the monarchy. In the interim, we would recommend the following steps to improve accountability and transparency:

Short-term measures

(1) An independent inquiry should be established to look at royal funding and expenditure, so that the spending of public money by the Royal Household that is at odds with public sector standards is exposed.

(2) The Grant should immediately be reduced to its 2015 level adjusted for inflation. Further reductions introduced over the two years should bring the Grant down to £10m a year.

(3) The formula for setting the grant where it is pegged to Crown Estate profits should be scrapped. The Grant should instead be set by Parliament each year, with spending audited and accounted for in line with standard public sector practice, and with unspent money being returned to the government each year.

(4) Charles and William should both be put on a salary pegged to that of the prime minister and adjusted for hours engaged in official business.

(5) Charles and William should each publish a register of interests.

(6) The Royal Household should publish details of items of expenditure over £500.

(7) The Treasury should issue guidance to the Accounting Officer that travel by a member of the Royal Family from one residence to another should not be regarded as official and should not be paid for out of public funds.

(8) The Royal Household should change the composition of the Lord Chamberlain's Committee such that the majority of the members are independent non-executives not involved in the running of the Household of the Prince and Princess of Wales.

(9) The Lord Chamberlain's Committee should publish its terms of reference together with the minutes and agenda of its meetings.

Medium-term measures

(10) The Government should publish a list of artwork, antiques, furniture, jewelry and other assets held by the sovereign in an official capacity (in right of Crown) to ensure clear separation between state property and private property. Where assets are inalienable meaning that they cannot be sold this should also be recorded in the register.

Longer-term measures

(11) All maintenance and upkeep of buildings, artworks and other assets should be transferred to the responsibility of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

(12) Ultimately, the Government must develop a plan for the abolition of the monarchy and transition to a republic.

16. About our research

We have carried out extensive research in order to prepare this report. This included looking at over 12 years of financial data related to Sovereign Grant spending. We have also examined primary and secondary legislation relating to the funding of the monarchy. As part of our analysis, we compared the framework agreement for the Royal Household with the framework agreement for other public bodies.

We also consulted (an official register of protected historic buildings). Republic's researchers also made over 40 freedom of information requests as well as consulting official registers and other information published by regulators. Section 18 of this report contains a list of references while section 17 contains suggestions for further reading.

17. Further reading

Abolish the Monarchy: Why We Should and How We Will, Graham Smith, 2023
Ditch the Duchies: A Report into the Public Ownership of the Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall, Republic, 2025
Half a Billion Pound Royals, the: 2024 Royal Finances Report, Republic, 2024
Royal Mint, National Debt, Norman Baker, 2025.
Royal Secrets: A Report on Royal Secrecy and Power, Republic, 2015

18. References

A Charter of 1337, c. 0. Accessed at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/aep/Edw3/11/0
(accessed: 16 November 2025)

The Associated Press, Spain's king unveils assets amid push for more transparency
https://apnews.com/article/europe-arts-and-entertainment-spain-king-felipe-vi-juan-carlos-a2024ad8491c8bb7656730af31e2eb4d

Baker, Norman, ... And What Do You Do?, 2019.

Baker, Norman, Royal Mint, National Debt, 2025.

Bank of England, *Inflation calculator*

BBC, King Charles's Coronation cost taxpayers £72m, Updated 22 November 2024.
Accessed at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c04lyddv2p5o
(accessed: 7 November 2025)

Bogdanor, Vernon, The monarchy and the constitution (1995)

Canada Historica, Canadian Encyclopedia, under the entry for "Crown Land" (article by V.P. Neimanis). Last edited 2024.

https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/crown-land

Casa Real (Spanish Royal Household), Presupuestos Anuales (Annual budget)
https://www.casareal.es/ES/Transparencia/informacioneconomica/Paginas/organizacion-y-presupuesto_presupuestos.aspx
(accessed: 9 November 2025)

Charity Commission, Register of Charities, entry for the Royal Collection Trust (Charity number: 1016972). Accessed at:
https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search/-/charity-details/1016972/

Civil List Act 1697, c. 23. Accessed at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/aep/Will3/9/23/

Civil List Act 1837, c. 2. Accessed at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/1-2/2/contents
(accessed: 6 November 2025)

Civil List Act 1952, c. 37. Accessed at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6and1Eliz2/15-16/37/contents
(accessed: 7 November 2025)

Continental Shelf Act 1964, c. 29. Accessed at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/29/contents

Coroners and Justice Act 2009, c. 25. Accessed at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/25/
(accessed: 31 December 2025)

The Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (Commencement No. 15, Consequential and Transitory Provisions) Order 2013. Accessed at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/1869/
(accessed: 31 December 2025)

Crown Estate, Governance. Accessed at:
https://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/about-us/governance

Crown Estate Act 1961, c. 55. Accessed at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/9-10/55
(accessed: 8 November 2025)

Crown Lands Act 1702, c. 1. Accessed at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/aep/Ann/1/1/contents

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Framework agreement for the Environment Agency
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-agency-framework-document-may-2025/environment-agency-framework-document (accessed: 29 December 2025)

Encyclopædia Britannica, under the entry for "Civil List," Accessed at:
https://www.britannica.com/topic/mews (accessed: 9 November 2025)

Encyclopædia Britannica, under the entry for "Mews" Accessed at:
https://www.britannica.com/topic/mews (accessed: 6 November 2025)

Environment Agency annual report and accounts for the financial year April 2022 to March 2023 (accessed: 2 January 2026)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/653a337380884d0013f71b7c/EA-Annual-Report-2022-23.pdf

Erskine May's treatise on the law, privileges, proceedings and usage of Parliament (25th edition, 2019)
https://erskinemay.parliament.uk/

Explanatory Notes to the Sovereign Grant Act 2011, Accessed at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/15/notes/division/6/2/2

Financial Conduct Authority, FG 17/6 The treatment of politically exposed persons for anti-money laundering purposes, Accessed at:
https://www.fca.org.uk/publication/finalised-guidance/fg17-06.pdf

Financial Reporting Council, UK Corporate Governance Code, 2018 and 2024, Accessed at:
https://www.frc.org.uk/library/standards-codes-policy/corporate-governance/uk-corporate-governance-code/ (accessed: 3 January 2026)

Freedom of Information Act 2000, c. 36. Accessed at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents

Greater London Authority Act 1999, c. 29. Accessed at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/29

Guardian, Revealed: royal family has power to censor BBC coronation coverage. 5 May 2023
https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/may/05/revealed-royal-family-has-power-to-censor-bbc-coronation-coverage

Guardian, Royal family given veto on use of footage of Queen's funeral, Guardian, 22 September 2022. Accessed at:
https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/sep/22/royal-family-veto-footage-coverage-queen-elizabeth-ii-funeral

Hansard, HC Debates, 30 June 2011, vol 530, col 1144. Accessed at: https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2011-06-30b.1144.1

Historic England, National Heritage List for England

https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/

HMRC, Employment Income Manual. Accessed at: https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/employment-income-manual

HMRC, Expenses and benefits for employers. Access at: https://www.gov.uk/employer-reporting-expenses-benefits

HM Stationery Office, Parliamentary Papers. (1831). Accessed at: https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Parliamentary_Papers/VzcSAAAAYAAJ

House of Commons Library, Can parliamentarians discuss the Royal Family? Accessed at: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10426/

House of Commons Library, National Minimum Wage statistics (By Brigid Francis-Devine) 12 February 2025
https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7735/CBP-7735.pdf

House of Commons Library, Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government. Accessed at: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06520/

House of Commons Library, The Royal Prerogative and Ministerial Advice. Accessed at: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9877/CBP-9877.pdf

Independent, Calls for King and William's duchies to be abolished to create 'national estate' https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/duchy-of-lancaster-charles-duchy-of-cornwall-prince-government-b2704677.html

Irish Times, Cost of running President's office set to rise to over €6m next year. Accessed at: https://www.irishtimes.com/politics/2025/10/22/cost-of-running-presidents-office-set-to-rise-to-over-6m-next-year/

Licensing Act 2003, c. 17. Accessed at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/17/contents

Ministry of Justice, Framework Agreement for the Information Commissioner's Office https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2013-1644/Revised_MoJ-ICO_framework_agreement_1_9_13.pdf

National Audit Office, Royal Household spending and accountability https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/royal-household-spending-and-accountability.pdf

The Orange Book Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts (updated 3 June 2025) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/orange-book/the-orange-book-management-of-risk-principles-and-concepts

Osborne Estate Act 1902, c. 37. Accessed at:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Edw7/2/37/enacted
(accessed: 7 November 2025)

Republic, Ditch the Duchies: A Report into the Public Ownership of the Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall, 2025

Republic, Half a Billion Pound Royals, the: 2024 Royal Finances Report, 2024

Republic, No cut to Sovereign Grant despite government announcement press release, 20 July 2023

Republic, Royal Secrets: A Report on Royal Secrecy and Power, 2015

Royal Collection Trust, the Royal Library and the Royal Archives: a Guide to Collections. Accessed at:
https://www.royal.uk/sites/default/files/media-packs/rlra_guide_to_collections.pdf

Royal Household, Royal Archives, the
https://www.royal.uk/the-royal-archives

Royal Household, Guide to royal finances (accessed: 6 November 2025)
https://www.royal.uk/royal-finances

Royal Household, Sovereign Grant and Sovereign Grant Reserve Annual Reports for 2012-13 through to 2024-25

Royal Trustees, Report of the Royal Trustees on the Sovereign Grant 2021-22
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/605b2bace90e0724be025b23/Royal_Trustees_Report_21-22.pdf

Smith, Graham, Abolish the Monarchy: Why We Should and How We Will, 2023

Sovereign Grant Act 2011, c. 15. Accessed at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/15/contents (Accessed: 5 November 2025)

The Sovereign Grant Act 2011 (Change of Percentage) Order 2017
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/438/contents/made (Accessed: 3 January 2026)

The Sovereign Grant Act 2011 (Change of Percentage) Order 2024
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/52/contents/made (Accessed: 3 January 2026)

Theatres Act 1968, c. 54. Accessed at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1968/54/ (Accessed: 31 December 2025)

Treasury, Accounting Officer's Survival Guide, the, December 2015 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a75a00aed915d6faf2b46f4/AOs_survival_guide__Dec_2015_.pdf (Accessed: 7 November 2025)

Treasury, Managing Public Money, June 2025. Accessed at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/684ae4c6f7c9feb9b0413804/Managing_Public_Money.pdf (Accessed: 7 November 2025)

Treasury, Memorandum of Understanding on Royal Taxation, July 2023. Accessed at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64b954a506f78d000d742644/Memorandum_of_Understanding_on_Royal_Taxation__008_.pdf

Treasury, Template Framework Document — Public Corporations, March 2022. Accessed at: https://web.archive.org/web/20260103071728/https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62de78dcd3bf7f2d7be17c9a/Template_Framework_Document_-_Public_Corporations.docx

UK Government, Guidance: Holiday pay and entitlement reforms from 1 January 2024. Accessed at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/simplifying-holiday-entitlement-and-holiday-pay-calculations/holiday-pay-and-entitlement-reforms-from-1-january-2024#additional-resources

UK Government, Orange Book, the, Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts, 2023. Accessed at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6453acadc33b460012f5e6b8/HMT_Orange_Book_May_2023.pdf (Accessed: 7 November 2023)

UK Government, Sovereign Grant Act 2011: guidance. Accessed at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sovereign-grant-act-2011-guidance/sovereign-grant-act-2011-guidance#the-crown-estate

UK Government, Whole of Government Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024. Accessed at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68776746352c290d20dcaef9/WGA_2023-24_accounts.pdf

Frank, Van Lerven and Jackson, Andrew, A government is not a household, New Economics Foundation. Accessed at: https://neweconomics.org/2018/10/a-government-is-not-a-household (Accessed 19 October 2025)

Wadham, John, Harris, Kelly, and Peretz, George, Blackstone's Guide to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, 2011

19. Glossary

Term	**Meaning**
Accounting Officer	An Accounting Officer is a senior official of a UK public sector organisation who manages the day-to-day business of the organisation. Usually, the accounting officer is the permanent secretary or Chief Executive Officer. In the case of the Royal Household, the Accounting Officer is the Keeper of the Privy Purse. The Accounting Officer is personally responsible for managing the organisation efficiently and effectively and reporting to Parliament however in the case of the Royal Household the Parliamentary accountability falls to Government Ministers.
Annuity	A fixed amount of money paid annually to someone, usually for the rest of their life. Prior to the introduction of the Sovereign Grant Act, a number of members of the Royal Family received annuities from public funds.
Civil List	The Civil List originally met state expenditure other than military expenditure i.e. the cost of civil government. Historically, this has included the secret service and royal expenditure. From the 1800s, the Civil List was intended only to cover royal expenditure and not the full cost of civil government. The Sovereign Grant replaced the Civil List funding for the monarchy.
Coronation	A ceremony in which a King or Queen is crowned. The ceremony is unnecessary as the person being crowned is already the monarch before the start of the ceremony, their reign having started when the previous monarch died.
Crown Estate	A public body forming part of UK Central Government. The Crown Estate’s profits are

	used to calculate the amount of the Sovereign Grant but the Sovereign Grant is not paid from the Crown Estate.
Crown Estate Scotland	A public body that manages Crown land in Scotland for the benefit of the people of Scotland.
Crown Jewels	Crowns, jewelry and other items often worn by royals on state occasions such as at coronations.
Crown Lands	Land owned by the state in the United Kingdom. This includes land that is managed by the Crown Estate and Government Departments as well as land owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and Duchy of Lancaster.
Duchy of Cornwall	The Duchy of Cornwall was created by an Act of Parliament in 1337. It is one of two royal duchies, the other being the Duchy of Lancaster. The land owned by the Duchy is Crown land.
Duchy of Lancaster	One of two royal duchies, the other being the Duchy of Cornwall. The land owned by the Duchy is Crown land. The Duchy of Lancaster's main holdings include
FOI	Freedom of Information
Golden ratchet	The name given by Republic to the mechanism in the statutory funding formula for the Sovereign Grant that ensures that no matter what happens to the profitability of the Crown Estate, the Sovereign Grant will not be lower than it was for the previous year. See also Step 3 of Section 6
Grant-in-Aid	An amount of money given by a government to an organisation to fund its general activities often by a sponsoring department. Prior to the Sovereign Grant Act, the Royal Household received a grant-in-aid for Royal Travel from the Department for Transport as well as grants-in-aid from the Department forCulture, Media and Sport for the maintenance of the Royal Palaces and for

	expenditure on communication and information.
Inalienable	An asset that is “inalienable” cannot be sold, gifted or transferred. For example, the Crown Jewels are inalienable and cannot be sold by the Sovereign.
In right of Crown	Assets held by the King ‘in right of Crown’ are state-owned assets.
Keeper of the Privy Purse	The Keeper of the Privy Purse is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Sovereign Grant. In effect, the Keeper of the Privy Purse is the Chief Executive of the Royal Household. The Keeper of the Privy Purse is also the Treasurer to the Sovereign. In addition, the Keeper of the Privy Purse is the Accounting Officer for both the Sovereign Grant and for the Sovereign Grant Reserve. See also Privy Purse.
Mews	Stables used to keep horses or a building previously used for horses and converted into residences or offices.
National Audit Office	The National Audit Office or NAO is the UK public body responsible for auditing Government Departments and other Central Government.
NAO	See National Audit Office
Occupied Royal Palaces	The term is used in the context of the Sovereign Grant to refer to the following ● Buckingham Palace; ● St James’s Palace; ● Clarence House; ● Marlborough House Mews; ● The residential and office areas of Kensington Palace; ● The Royal Mews and Royal Paddocks at Hampton Court; ● Windsor Castle; and

	● the buildings in the Home and Great Parks at Windsor. Money from Sovereign Grant funds is used to pay for the maintenance of these buildings. The Royal Household does not publish a full list of the buildings at these locations or who lives in them.
Orange Book	The UK Government's official on risk management principles and practices. The Orange Book applies to central government bodies on a "comply or explain" basis.
Privy Purse	The term is used to refer to the wealth of the Sovereign that has been accumulated from the receipts of revenue profits from the Duchy of Lancaster. See also Keeper of the Privy Purse.
Regularity opinion	A special type of opinion issued by an auditor as to whether funds have been spent for the purposes specified by Parliament.
Royal Archives	The Royal Archives holds over 260 years of official and private documents relating to the Sovereign, the Royal Family and the Royal Household. These records do not form part of the National Archives and are instead controlled by the monarchy and outside the reach of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
Royal Collection	The Royal Collection consists of over one million objects.
Royal Collection Charitable Trust	A UK registered charity. In the Sovereign Grant Report it is often stated that it is one of the five Departments of the Royal Household.
Royal Household	Royal Household is a widely used term but is not defined in legislation. The Royal Household is part of UK Central Government. The Royal Household

	receives funding from the Sovereign Grant.
Royal inflation	Royal inflation is the term used in this report for the rate at which the expenditure of the Royal Household has increased per year. Royal inflation has run at an average of 7.5% a year for the 12 years from the start of the Sovereign Grant.
Royal prerogative	The sets of powers that can be exercised by the Sovereign or in some cases Government Ministers without consulting Parliament.
Royal Rota	The royal rota is the press pool that covers the British Royal Family. Restrictions are imposed on the relevant journalists and media outlets. This includes a dress code for members of the press reporting on formal occasions.
Royal Tax Memorandum	The royal tax memorandum documents the bespoke income tax and inheritance tax arrangements that apply to the KIng and the heir to the throne. The memorandum essentially provides that private benefits arising under the Sovereign Grant arrangements are not subject to tax.
Royal Trustees	A corporate body established by Section 10 of the Civil List Act 1952 The three Royal Trustees are the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Keeper of the Privy Purse. The Royal Trustees determine the annual value of the Sovereign Grant.
Sovereign Grant	Public funding made available by the UK Government for the Royal Household under the terms of the Sovereign Grant Act 2011. The Sovereign Grant was introduced in 2012 and replaced the funding from the Civil List and grants-in-aid.
Sovereign Grant Act 2011	An Act of the UK Parliament which created the Sovereign Grant which replaced the Civil List and grant-in-aid funding.
Sovereign Grant Reserve	Holds unused money from the Sovereign Grant. The Royal Household is allowed to spend the money in future years. The fund is controlled by the Royal Trustees.

Appendix A: Rates applied in the Sovereign Grant

	Percentage
2012-13	15%
2013-14	15%
2014-15	15%
2015-16	15%
2016-17	15%
2017-18	25%
2018-19	25%
2019-20	25%
2020-21	25%
2021-22	25%
2022-23	25%
2023-24	25%
2024-25	12%
2025-26	12%
2026-27	12%
2027-28	20.5%

Legislation	**Percentage**	**Dates**
Sovereign Grant Act 2011 (as originally enacted)	15%	1 April 2012 to 31 March 2017
The Sovereign Grant Act 2011 (Change of Percentage) Order 2017	25%	1 April 2017 to 31 March 2024
The Sovereign Grant Act 2011 (Change of Percentage) Order 2024	12%	1 April 2024 to present

According to the Report of the Royal Trustees on the Sovereign Grant 2025-26, the reduction from 25% to 12% was made ‘in light of the expected increase in The Crown Estate’s profits due to additional income from offshore wind developments. Despite the reduced percentage the Sovereign Grant has continued to increase at rate well in excess of inflation.

Appendix B: Introduction to legislation

The language used in legislation is archaic and deferential.

Sovereign Grant Act 2011 — introductory text

2011 CHAPTER 15

An Act to make provision for the honour and dignity of the Crown and the Royal Family; make provision about allowances and pensions under the Civil List Acts of 1837 and 1952; and for connected purposes.

[18th October 2011]

Most Gracious Sovereign,

WHEREAS Your Majesty has been graciously pleased to signify to Your faithful Commons in Parliament assembled that Your Majesty is desirous that consideration should be given by Your faithful Commons to the provision made by Parliament for the financial support of Your Majesty and other members of the Royal Household and to allowing for the continuation of support in the reigns of Your successors.

And Whereas Your Majesty has further been graciously pleased to signify that Your Majesty is desirous that the hereditary revenues of the Crown for any period for which support is provided to any of Your successors should be at the disposal of Your faithful Commons.

Now, therefore, we, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom in Parliament assembled, have freely and voluntarily resolved to make such provision as hereinafter appears for the purposes aforesaid, and we do most humbly beseech Your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

This report is published by Republic.
Our mission is to achieve the abolition of the monarchy in favour of a democratic alternative.

www.republic.org.uk

“You can have deference or you can have accountability but you can't have both.”

~A Scandal in Plain Sight

Republic